DIR CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

News Release

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DIR Endorses Engineering Apprenticeship Program as Innovative Workforce Solution

Valencia – Launching the pilot program to Governor Schwarzenegger's Engineering Initiative, the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) today announced a first-of-its-kind apprenticeship program at Stellar Microelectronics Inc. in Valencia to help California meet its need for new engineers to keep the state's economy vibrant.

"Not only will this program help fill California's goal of bringing 20,000 engineers into the state's workforce over the next decade, but it will also provide returning military veterans with career opportunities," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "I look forward to seeing this pilot program grow to additional campuses across California through partnerships between schools, the state and the private sector."

The program, which targets veterans, is expected to begin with the first group of apprentices in early 2009. This apprenticeship program is a partnership with DIR's Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS), Stellar Microelectronics, Inc., California State University Los Angeles and College of the Canyons.

"Apprenticeship is an earn-while-you-learn model of talent development and an innovative solution to California's shortage of engineers," said John Duncan, director of DIR. "Not only are we filling a need for engineers with the Governor's initiative, we are giving returning veterans a pathway to a lucrative career. "

"This program will allow returning veterans a multitude of opportunities within the state's higher education system," said Vincent Stewart, Assistant Secretary of Higher Education. "Working together we have created a pathway for participants to gain useful workforce skills, while also working towards an academic degree."

Stellar Microelectronics is an engineering design and production services company for high reliability electronics products in the biomedical, aerospace and military markets.

"In this age of economic uncertainty, Stellar is a rapidly growing company that is in a position to provide jobs to talented and experienced people coming out of our armed services," said Stellar Microelectronics' President, Gregory L. Horton. "Participating in the Governor's

Veterans Engineering Apprenticeship Program is consistent with Stellar's philosophy and passion to continue to build the finest team in the industry, which allows us to maintain high growth and onshore competitiveness in a global market."

Apprenticeship is employment. This initiative approach provides a pathway for the non-traditional student, such as the veteran. The experienced veteran may not have had an opportunity to gain a formal education; many have families and responsibilities that make it difficult to leave the workforce. This program allows them to earn a living while pursuing formal education. As the apprenticeship model requires on-the-job training the apprentice also gains real-world experience and learns the culture of the work place.

Many veterans will begin their apprenticeship with military experience relevant to engineering, while others may be starting from the beginning. The apprenticeship program includes a path for all. For the employer, participation in the program results in gaining an employee who is loyal, productive and trained exactly to the employer's needs.

This first apprenticeship program has multiple exit points for the apprentice. The apprentice may begin the program and obtain a technical certificate, earn an associate degree or continue training and earn a baccalaureate degree.

For more information on apprenticeship programs and opportunities in California please visit www.dir.ca.gov/das.

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